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# PROGRESSIVE DEMOCRACY

IN

## RELIGION;

OR,

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### REJOINDER OF "CLERICUS" TO "SCRUTATOR."

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"It is a maxim in religion, we think, which ought to rule in the hearts of Christian men, and

'Most of all in man that ministers,  
And serves the altar,'

that the world is to be convinced *that Christians are not of necessity fools.*"—  
DR. BARNES.

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SCHENECTADY :  
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## REJOINDER OF "CLERICUS."

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IN one of our cities, not a hundred miles distant, during a prayer meeting, an individual rose to edify his brethren by a short exhortation. He prefaced his exhortation with the following capital remark: "I belong to the *progressive democracy in religion.*" In accordance with the same spirit, when the Synod of Albany first took up the subject of Dancing, an individual threw out the idea—an idea, too, that seemed to have great weight with the zealous—that it was high time the Synod had taken *stringent* action against this evil; for the reason, that it would make Presbyterianism *distinctive in its character.* We suppose, from his apparent willingness to make dancing a term of church membership, like "Scrutator"—that able champion of the Progressives—and from several speeches on the occasion, all zealously tending to the same point, he was fully convinced that the best way to make Presbyterianism *distinctive* (not *extinctive*, reader,) would be for the denomination to go over, in a body, to the Progressive Democracy in Religion. This would satisfy the world that Christians are not "fools," as Dr. Barnes says, "of *necessity.*" Doubtless our hero of the prayer-meeting would deliver an-

other speech on the occasion, in perfect harmony with the movement, and would extend to them a most cordial fellowship. We wish we knew that fellow. We want to thank him for that capital introduction to his speech. Had he designed to burlesque a certain class of modern religionists, he hit it exactly. Nothing could be more to the point. Religion has its progressive democracy as well as the state. Men who seize a single idea, and vow to it eternal allegiance, with all the ardor and devotion of the redoubtable hero of Cervantes. Valiant knights they are, too. No obstacle daunts their courage. No draw-back checks their progress. They will encounter a threshing-machine with a valor as unflinching as that which instigated the celebrated knight in his attack on the windmill ; and, though the conflict leaves the threshing-machine victorious and its antagonists with mangled limbs as well as bloody noses, yet they pause only for a moment, to cry out, persecution "for righteousness' sake ;" when, recovering, as if by magic, they renew the struggle with a like valor and with like success. Our age abounds in examples. Among the great and growing evils, on which these men exercise their valor, is that most awful of all awful iniquities that ever cursed the earth—an evil, which, to judge of the importance they attach to it, is likely to bring in its train, wars, pestilences, and famines, and other dire calamities, like the merchant's goods, too numerous to mention: we mean the evil of occasionally dancing for amusement. Compared with this, heathenism, with all its degradation, its cruelty

and its crimes, is as nothing. Pause, ye missionary heralds! Hold, ye philanthropists, who are printing Bibles and tracts, and laboring to dispel the intellectual and moral darkness that broods over the world, hold, we say, till these valiant knights have prostrated this deadly foe! Behold the spectacle! Niagara foaming with rage and calling in a voice of thunder on the upper lakes to pour down their waters to drown a rat! While the tiger and elephant are loose, these men are arousing all creation to bring their clubs and cudgels to kill a mouse. Is there a minister or a layman who, hearing this cry, hesitates to obey the summons? Tremble, ye culprits! Don't you hear their response? "Meroz" is cursed! for he "comes not up to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

Not long since, the writer of this felt himself called upon by the state of the times, to publish an argument against the increasing tendency, in ecclesiastical bodies, to push their legislation to extremes; and also to awaken the attention of Christians to the "more excellent way" of reforming the world, than of making every new fantasy, respecting matters non-essential, a term of church-membership: viz. by concentrating their energies on the direct furtherance of the Gospel. We addressed our communication to the Synod of Albany. Perhaps the public may get the impression, from our omission to discriminate, that *all* of the Synod, except us, were in favor of that kind of legislation. Far otherwise. A large number of that body agree with us in the *main* posi-

tions we have taken. To our Letter several replies have appeared. One in the columns of the Spectator, a professedly religious paper in Albany. It amounted to nothing. It was mere random declamation. We were not at all surprised, when we saw in the columns of the same paper which contained this, pious froth, an urgent call, by the editor, on his patrons, to make a general rally and procure for him additional subscribers. This battery, thought we, will soon silence itself. Its subscribers cannot be sufficiently fond of noise, to pay their money a great while for powder merely to shoot wads.

Another individual has written an answer and published it. It is directed to Clericus. This is also a gem. When we first read it we were terribly frightened. At the least noise we instinctively started, supposing the sheriff was approaching with a writ, "de hæretico comburendo." For the moment, we were laboring under the illusion that we were living in times anterior to the toleration act. Recollection of the nineteenth century, however, soon returned, when we recovered our senses, and breathed more freely. To save "Scrutator" the mortification of being passed by in silence, we will notice his leading arguments.

First, let the reader understand our own. What was our position? Was it to favor balls or worldliness? Not at all. It was simply this: *Church courts have no right to make dancing a term of church membership.* In defending this position, we verily thought we were doing the church a service. We were de-

fending the rights of the private members of the church from an *unwarrantable assumption of authority* over them, on the part of their superiors. Every layman is seriously interested in resisting every such encroachment. There is a *principle* involved, which vitally affects his individual interests. Because, if church courts take it into their heads to force the conscience of a layman in regard to one thing, not in itself wrong, they may in a thousand other things. Where is the limit to this power? Where will they stop? Bear in mind, reader, that *this* and *this* only, is the issue which "Clericus" has raised. Now, how are we answered? We will represent it in the form of a dialogue.

*Clericus.* Church courts have no right to make dancing a term of church-membership, because Christ does not, and there is no passage of Scripture which explicitly condemns it.

*Scrutator.* You had no right to write that letter to the Synod of Albany.

*Clericus.* Nor have church courts a right to make dancing a term of church-membership, on the ground that it is *inexpedient*. Dr. Barnes and others say, that the doctrine of expediency, as exhibited by Paul, where he says, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth," &c., applies likewise to dancing, and, therefore, condemns it. Well, if that passage be applicable to dancing, so also is the following, written by the Apostle on the same subject, and designed to elucidate the same principle: "Let not him that eateth despise him that

eateth not ; and let not him that eateth not, judge him that eateth ; for God hath received him." Or, to change a word, "*Let not him that danceth not, judge him that danceth ; for God hath received him.*" Church courts, therefore, have no right to make dancing a term of communion.

*Scrutator.* Ah ! we smell the rat. You are not only worldly yourself, but you are an advocate of worldliness.

*Clericus.* We deem it best for church courts, as well as individuals, "not to be wise *above what is written.*"

*Scrutator.* Ah ! we now not only smell the rat, but we distinctly see it. Monstrous ! It is as big as an elephant ! Clericus is the most worldly man in existence ! He is but "little better than one of the wicked."

*Clericus.* Dr. Barnes himself, in his commentary on the passage I have quoted before, as an offset to his, says, (a circumstance he seems to have forgotten when he wrote his sermon on Dancing,) that this passage teaches distinctly, that we have no *right to force* the conscience of our brethren in regard to matters "non-essential." He says, "If he cannot see that the Bible requires a particular cut to his coat," no power on earth has a right to attempt to *make* him see it ; that to do so is an unauthorized meddling with "other men's matters"—a thing expressly condemned by the Apostle Peter ; that such an exercise of power is "lording it over God's heritage ;" that this principle of the Apostle lies at the very founda-

tion of *true* charity, and that, if men had only acted on this principle, it would have saved many, if not all, church contentions. Dr. Hodge says, in relation to this passage, that "If God has not made a thing a term of communion, *we have no right to do so.*"

*Scrutator.* We will leave you to settle your controversy with Dr. Barnes, and the other Doctors, as best you can.

*Clericus.* The American Tract Society have published a tract which pretends to bring forward three passages of Scripture, which explicitly condemn dancing. The first of these passages has not the remotest allusion to dancing. The second, Dr. Barnes says, has no design whatever to teach that dancing is wrong. The third speaks of the fact that the daughter of Herodias danced before Herod, but no more condemns dancing, than the passage, in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, which says, when the son returned, they had "music and dancing," approves of it.

*Scrutator.* Did Jesus Christ and the Apostles dance?

*Clericus.* Church courts, therefore, have no right to make dancing a term of communion.

*Scrutator.* You are opposed to every good reform.

*Clericus.* We have another difficulty. If church courts do this, they virtually give up to Rome, principles, which, if carried out, would authorize all her extravagances. They do this in three respects.—1st. They add unauthorized supplements to the word of God. They engraft upon it a doctrine which it does not teach. Now, is it not one of our great com-

plaints against Rome, that she makes "void the law by her traditions?" 2d. They usurp an unauthorized power over the human conscience. They have no right to *force* the conscience of their brethren in regard to things in themselves lawful or indifferent. Do we not complain bitterly of Rome for thus tyrannizing over the human conscience? 3d. They make, as we have been showing all along, unauthorized tests of church-membership. This is another of our great complaints against Rome. This question, therefore, of making dancing, and every other little thing, a term of communion, involves the very hinge on which hangs our controversy with Rome. We cannot consistently reproach her for carrying out a principle we adopt and practise ourselves.

*Scrutator.* Tetzal went through Germany peddling indulgences.

*Clericus.* We have still another difficulty. If Church courts make dancing a term of communion, it will open the door for making additional tests, when urged by that class of men commonly known as men of "one-idea." If Church courts do it in this case, consistency would require them to do it in others. Why not? The same arguments, by which they justify this, would apply, with equal force, to a thousand other things—such as fashionable parties, using tobacco, or tea and coffee, and extravagance in dress—moderate drinking of wine, holding of slaves &c. When urged by these "one idea" religionists to carry out their principles, how can they, in all consistency, refuse?



*Scrutator.* What venom against serious truth! Perhaps the public, on the ground that no man making the least pretension to common sense, would make such replies, may suspect that this is burlesque. If they will take our letter to the Synod and “Scrutator’s” reply, and compare the two, they will find *this is indeed* a true representation of the real state of the controversy. Yet “Scrutator,” with a characteristic self-contempt, says he does not *pretend* that he has said *all* that might be said against dancing. Dr. Barnes said well, “That the world is yet to be convinced that christians are not of necessity fools”—only he might have added that the same is to be done in regard to ministers. We promise the public, that before we get through, we will do what little we can towards so desirable a result.

“Scrutator” is here ready to say, “You have omitted in your dialogue some of the *strongest points* of my reply!” We acknowledge it, “Scrutator.” We omitted them there on purpose to make them matters of special consideration afterwards. Now we will bring forward your *strong points*. Here they are, *verbatim*, from your reply; the strongest we can find. “Moreover it is expected that the grossly profane will scoff at serious things; but it was not to have been expected of a minister of Christ.” Again:—“Sir, are you indeed a clergyman? Or have you only assumed the title for effect? Is it possible that such venom against serious truth can find a lodgement in a clergyman’s heart?” Again: “Are you a pastor?—will the promulgation of such opinions

raise you in the estimation of the pious portion of your flock? Will they secure the confidence and esteem of the thoughtless and irreligious? Are you unsettled? and do you wish to secure a field of labor and usefulness? Will the letter which you have written to the Synod of Albany be likely to introduce you into those vacancies where they wish to secure the labors of a pious, self-denying, faithful, uncompromising minister? Oh, sir, I am sorry that you have written that letter, for your own sake. That you may be led to see things more correctly, is the sincere prayer, of yours, truly. SCRUTATOR."

So "Scrutator"—alias, little David, (for in his reply he modestly compares himself to David cutting off the head of Goliath, i. e., the head of Clericus, with Goliath's own sword,) after thus turning up the whites of his eyes and ejecting this pious bile, betakes himself to prayer. He prays for our conversion. This reminds us of an occurrence that took place in a western village, and under our own observation. Elder Knapp, at the time, was under full sail with one of his protracted meetings. A prayer-meeting was held one evening in the week by the young people. A most worthy and excellent elderly lady, who had for many years taken a great interest in the young people, was wont, occasionally, to attend this meeting. She had been much esteemed by the young people in the days of their calmness, and, as a token of their respect and affection, when they spoke of her, they would prefix the appellation, "mother;" to her real name; which, for the sake of convenience, we will call Quitman.

At this time the young people had become nearly crazed with Knapp's extravagances. So much so, that they introduced into their accustomed meeting, the practice of having the "sisters" participate, vocally, with the "brethren" in prayer. On one of these occasions, just at the height of their fanaticism, when the "sisters" were quite officious in doing their share of the praying, and the "brethren" equally conspicuous in groaning, Mother Quitman happened to be present. Immediately after the meeting was dismissed, before they left the room, Mother Quitman ventured to remonstrate with them for the gross irregularity she had witnessed. Whereupon the leader of the meeting, who was one of the *young* progressive democrats in religion, exclaimed, "Brethren and sisters, let us *pray* for Mother Quitman." Instantly all were down upon their knees, and Heaven was violently importuned to forgive this transgressing mother in Israel, for the awful sin of opposing the work of God. And were they not right? Was it not plain, as the noon day sun, that Mother Quitman was opposed to *prayer*? Did she not, on this occasion, attempt to quench the *spirit* of prayer? Will any one dare to justify her conduct? If so, we tell him that the *majority* of these humble, self-denying, self-abasing, and self-diffident brethren and sisters, were *against* her. Indeed, the most prominent actors in Knapp's protracted meeting were horrified at Mother Quitman's presumption. What greatly aggravates her case is, that though she was not a *minister*, yet, she was a minister's wife. *Can it*

*be possible?* What! a minister's wife oppose prayer? Who doubts *now* that these young people were *right* in interceding—most earnestly interceding—for this *wicked* woman? Will any one have the hardihood to dispute this? We say, they *were*. *There*, answer us, if you can. And so was "Scrutator" right in praying for "Clericus." And, that *his* prayer "*availeth much*," is evident from the subdued tone with which Clericus conducts his rejoinder.

We thank "Scrutator" for his prayer. Would that we could return the compliment. But alas! "the prayer of the wicked is an abomination." No gift have we with which to return this extraordinary favor. All the return that we can make, we now offer in the way of advice. First: before he writes again, we advise "Scrutator" to study his grammar. When he gets to the verbs, let him learn the difference between the words "s-e-t" and "s-i-t," and sundry other words; and also glance his eye slightly over the article of prosody. Next we advise him to transmit his publication to Barnum, the celebrated curiosity-monger. It is a rarity. Nothing like it has appeared since the days of the Commonwealth. "Scrutator," however, has not shown quite so much *taste* in the selection of a title for his pamphlet, as the Puritans of those times did for like productions. They were accustomed to select titles like the following: "*Crumbs of Comfort for the Chickens of the Church*." "Scrutator" might remedy this defect by a second edition—binding up with it Barnes' Sermon, and the Tract of the American Tract Society on dancing; and

then adopt the foregoing title, with a slight variation, which we will suggest: for example, "Dumplings of Comfort for Pious Ranters." On the reverse of this book, he would do well to have a picture of himself; alias, David just in the act of cutting off Goliath's head with his own sword.

There are three things with which mortal man ought *never* to argue. A hurricane, a brawling woman, and a fanatic. With a hurricane, for the reason that logic has no aptitude for a contest with wind. With a brawling woman, for the reason that the essence of the victory consists in having the last word. With a fanatic, for the two reasons already given for avoiding a contest with the hurricane and the woman. This is the only apology we offer the public for dealing as we do with "Scrutator."

But, it is alleged that we have abused the American Tract Society, and ridiculed a tract which they have published. We acknowledge the likeness we drew, was sufficiently ugly and revolting. But we protest, the fault was not in the artist. He who has an ugly face, should not complain if the artist does not make him appear the perfection of beauty. What did we? We showed the utter fallacy, not to say *nonsense*, of the author's arguments. Then we noticed the impiety of a most ridiculous story, where an "Aged Pastor" is made to say, that God *damned* a young lady at the very instant she made up her mind to go to a ball. We have nothing to take back. It was a gross blunder in the American Tract Society to publish such a tract. They deserve the

rebuke. A more nonsensical string of arguments is seldom to be met with on any subject, than is contained in that tract. Then to give their sanction to such a story! What was the object of this story? Why to *prove* that God has done in his providence, what He *has not* done in his word, i. e. explicitly condemned dancing. What shall we say, too, of the blasphemous presumption of the "Aged Pastor," in attempting to wield the arm of the Almighty, for the purpose of making Him work a miracle to satisfy the contracted views of a mere mortal on the subject of dancing? What shall we say of his assuming to speak so confidently of God's secret dispensations? When the "Aged Pastor" wrote that marvellous declaration, he must have just returned from his pulpit, where he had been preaching from the text, "*The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed, belong unto us.*" What fanaticism was ever yet broached that has not claimed public credence on the ground that God had ratified it, by some extraordinary demonstrations of his providence! When the catarrhal influenza prevailed in France, in the fifteenth century, the priests taught the people that it was a judgment from God for singing an obscene song. When the person was attacked, they said, "He must have sung the song." (We seem to see "Scrutator," as he reads this, brightening up his eyes, from the reflection, that he has us completely on the hip, inasmuch as he can *now* give the world "confirmation strong as proof of Holy Writ," that "Clericus" is not only in favor of danc-

ing, but also of singing obscene songs.) The Romanists have fabricated thousands of absurd stories about God's inflicting miraculous judgments on Protestants for opposing the Holy Mother Church. And British Christians reciprocate their charity by insinuating that God has afflicted Ireland with a famine, because they are Catholics. Singular, that, though Ireland has been in the same religious condition for many centuries, yet the Almighty has just happened to think Ireland is inhabited by Catholics; and has just awakened to the importance of punishing them for their religion; particularly while heathen nations are *so much better* off, in point of religion, than they. ("Scrutator!" do you hear that? Is it not clear as mud that "Clericus" is a Catholic in disguise? Away with such a fellow from the earth!) That great and most charitable revival preacher,—(Pay attention, "Scrutator;" evidence is forthcoming that "Clericus" is likewise opposed to revivals.)—that great and most charitable revival preacher, Rev. Charles G. Finney, once said, in a public sermon, that God had laid Nettleton aside, because he had ceased to attend protracted meetings. That is, God wrought a miracle to punish Mr. Nettleton and convince the world that Mr. Finney was the chosen Gideon of the age, raised up expressly to lead on the "fearless little flock" of kindred spirits, whom alone it is the "Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom," to battle and to victory. When contemplating that man—Mr. Nettleton—we were prone to indulge the hope

that he went to heaven! But how can that be, when, towards the very close of his life, he “went not with” the “Progressive Democracy in religion?” What! a man go to heaven who opposed revivals—and—and—shall we say it? *even* Mr. Finney? No, it is out of the question. His case is as plain as that of the young lady, whom, according to the “Aged Pastor,” God condemned to hell for making up her mind to go to a ball. Nay, plainer. Because the “Pastor” being an “aged” man, may have fabricated that story in his dotage; but Mr. Finney was at mid-age—in the full maturity of his powers, and had undoubted evidence of the *fact* he relates. However, the story of the “Aged Pastor” has the sanction of the American Tract Society; and *that* surely will make it of *equal* weight with the story of Mr. Finney. A religious “Progressive” was once hindered from fulfilling an appointment to preach, on account of a violent thunder storm that suddenly came up just as he came near the place. In consequence his feet were turned in another direction. This he afterwards spoke of as a wonderful interposition of Providence. He was so overwhelmed with a sense of his own littleness that he really supposed the Almighty got up this terrible uproar of the elements expressly to give him a *hint* that he should not go to that place and preach.\* In the name of good sense, when will this fanaticism cease? When the world are made infidels by it? Yet it is fostered and encouraged by

\* See Rev. Sidney Smith on Special Providences, or Edinburgh Review.



a Society formed expressly to put down infidelity ! A Society, too, that is wonderfully particular in heralding through the land, what it calls the impositions of Romanism, because they tell big stories about God's working miracles through the relics of saints. "Scrutator," alias little "David," comes up, hurls his sling at our poor temples, because we did not give implicit credence to the story of the Aged Pastor, and, then, having prostrated "Goliath," he siezes his gigantic sword and cuts off the Giant's head. This latter act was because "Goliath" committed the "unpardonable sin" in reproving the American Tract Society for giving its high sanction to the custom of telling such marvellous stories. But it is not the *first* offence of the kind that this Society has committed. If it were, it might be overlooked. Other instances of the kind are on record. One will suffice. In Tract No. 221, of the bound volumes of the Society, put forth to aid the cause of Temperance, may be found the following story about an old lady, who, in consequence of a long habit of drinking alcohol, at last got on fire by spontaneous combustion, and burned up, clothes and all, in spite of all efforts of the servants and neighbors to extinguish the flames. After stating that there were *ten* cases of the kind, the author of this tract says,—“It would be unnecessary to relate the whole, but I will state one of them, and from *this* an idea can be formed of the rest. It is the case of a woman eighty years of age, exceedingly meagre, who had drunk *nothing but ardent spirits for years.* [Quite *probable.*] She was sitting in her elbow chair,

while her waiting maid went out of the room for a few moments. On her return, seeing her mistress on fire, she immediately gave the alarm ; and some people coming to her assistance, one of them endeavored to extinguish the flames with his hands, but *they adhered to them as if they had been dipped in brandy or oil on fire*. Water was brought and thrown on the body in abundance, *yet* the fire appeared more violent— [every body knows that water makes fire burn more violently,]—*and was not extinguished till the whole body had been consumed*. The lady was in the same place in which she sat every day, there was no extraordinary fire, and she had not fallen.”

We will start a query here. It is whether the old woman's *shoes* were burned up with her clothes. We can imagine how alcohol might saturate her stockings, and thereby make them combustible ; but that it should penetrate her shoes and make them also combustible ; shoes that, it is probable, she had not worn more than a year, though *she had drunk nothing but alcohol for many years* ; we say, that the shoes also should burn up, is to us a great miracle. We can conceive how a large quantity of clothes and a human body with all its flesh and bones, and teeth, too, especially the *teeth*, could be saturated with alcohol and burn up ; but we cannot get it through our hair how the *shoes* should share the same fate. Surely, though the smoke and stench must have been *slightly* offensive, being in the same room, yet, if the people stood there all the time, some of them might have snatched the *shoes* as a brand from the burning. Her

dress and stockings were consumed as well as the body. But, as no mention is made of the shoes being rescued from the conflagration, we have a right to infer that they too vanished with the rest; and this is our greatest wonder. We deem this a matter of *vast importance*—one that will seriously affect all future strides of old Mr. Temperance Reform. We doubt whether the old gentleman can walk much further, without having this or a similar pair of shoes to put on. He will surely bruise his feet if he stirs another step without them. In more points than one, therefore, is the temperance cause dependent on this wonderful story for its prosperity. In the next edition of that tract we hope this matter about the *shoes* will be cleared up. If not, we shall have an “*Inquirer*” put out on this *all-important* subject. We shall select the “*Inquirer*,” because it is its peculiar province to take subjects of *like* importance and give them a most *thorough, learned* and *labored* discussion. Already has this able publication, whose editors, with unparalleled disinterestedness, are seeking, as they say, *nothing* but truth, already has it made and published to the world, *gratis*, a discovery—second only to that of Morse’s Telegraph—a discovery which is likely to startle the nations, viz: that, though the great majority of mankind, of all ages, have thought otherwise, yet there *really* is a *radical* difference between twedle-dum and twedle-dee. Let the “*Inquirer*,” then, take hold of this mighty subject—and, if it cannot find the old woman’s shoes, we hope it will call a council of chemists and physicians, and have

the ashes of this marvellous conflagration analyzed and see if there are not *some* remains of the leather. But, *if*, after investigation, it finds that the ashes were thrown out into the fields, (of course there was no funeral, for the "*whole body was consumed*,") we hope that the *identical* spot where the ashes fell may be searched out, and it be ascertained whether vegetation has grown there from that day to this. We know, beforehand, from *reason*, that vegetation *ought not* to grow on such a spot. And should Dr. Hun contradict us, we pledge our word that we could fill a dozen numbers of the "Inquirer" with letters from eminent physicians throughout the country, that will say, Dr. Hun knows *nothing about it*. Now, the "Inquirer" need have no delicacy in taking hold of this through fear of interfering with the operations of the American Tract Society. When the result is ascertained, it may be issued in a new Tract; and thus the Society and the "Inquirer" might both pull together. Then, if both will publish the result simultaneously, we predict there will be such a rush of the people to sign the pledge as never has before been known—such as no previous array of astounding facts has ever caused.

But to be serious. We allude to these things, "not because we love Cæsar *less*, but Rome more." From our very heart we say it, we love the American Tract Society. No institution of the age is, in our judgment, better adapted to do good. But let it not encourage these fanatical extravagancies. Let it keep within its proper sphere and leave the "*isms*" of

the day to themselves. If men of "one-idea" have a little spare money, and offer it for a premium tract, let them publish the tracts at their own expense, and on their own responsibility. The Society will have enough to do to preach the Gospel. Besides, it will save itself a world of trouble. We have it from a source entitled to credit, that since the Society published the Tract on Dancing, its officers have received letters from Abolitionists from all parts of the country, requesting them to publish Tracts on Slavery; and, urging, *as a reason*, that the Society had published a Tract on Dancing. In this the Abolitionists were right. Surely slavery is a greater evil than dancing. Now, the Society *ought* to take a position where it *can be* consistent. If it does not, it will get into trouble, of which it has no conception. A portion, at least, of the religious community will not go beyond the line where "Forbearance ceases to be a virtue."

But, "Scrutator" makes another allegation. "Clericus" is opposed to the reforms of the day. This allegation is based upon the following language of our Letter :

"Indeed the whole policy of special organizations, and special enactments against special evils is, in our humble judgment, incorrect. Providence, no doubt, has wise reasons in permitting the experiments of the present age to be tried. He may thereby demonstrate to the world by *our* experiments, and to succeeding ages, that his *own* plan of reforming men which strikes at the heart, the source of all these

“ evils, is the best. So thought Paul, and his col-  
 “ leagues. ‘ God forbid that I should glory,’ says he,  
 “ ‘ save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ Nor  
 “ did he. Imagine, for a moment, the Apostle turning  
 “ aside from his grand mission, and sending word to  
 “ Corinth, or to Ephesus, that on a certain day he  
 “ would be there and lecture on Anti-Slavery, or Tem-  
 “ perance, or on Dancing, or on any other particular  
 “ evil, after which he would organize a society ! What  
 “ can be more ludicrous ! And is the nature of your  
 “ mission, Reverend Sirs, different from his ? Ought  
 “ you to turn aside and concentrate your energies on  
 “ particular vices ? No, not if you would adhere to  
 “ apostolic example. If the same labor and zeal,  
 “ and time and money, which have been spent  
 “ in the 19th century in this way, had been devoted  
 “ to the *direct* furtherance of the Gospel, there would  
 “ have been, at this day, a far more wide-spread and  
 “ substantial reformation in all these particular re-  
 “ spects than there is now, and many more souls  
 “ saved—to say nothing of the church contentions  
 “ and distractions these proceedings have caused.  
 “ This, we take it, is God’s way of reforming the  
 “ world.”

“ Clericus” is of the opinion, Mr. “ Scrutator,” that  
 you, and many other good men, are not taking  
 the most appropriate measures for reforming the  
 world. Special enactments against special evils, and  
 special organizations to put down special evils, are  
 too slender reliances on which to base our depend-  
 ance for subjugating this revolted world to the do-

minion of Christ. It strikes us, Sir, that the Great Founder of our religion knew, fully as well as you and other reformers, *what* organization was best to effect this object, when He constituted the church. Had He deemed it better to adopt these reforming machines, on which you so much rely, we think He would have left directions for the Apostles and others to ply them exclusively, and leave the church to take care of herself. But He thought otherwise. Accordingly, when He commissioned His disciples, He did not say, "Go ye into all the world and form Temperance and Anti-Slavery Societies, and deliver lectures on these subjects;" but, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, baptizing them, &c.," i. e. inducting them into the church by the proper ceremony of initiation. These patent reforming machines, Sir, require too many hands and too much expense, to work them. Then, after all, the work they do is usually of little worth. Both the warp and the woof are of miserable material, and miserably put together. It wears but a little while. Notwithstanding all the efforts of reforming tinkers to make these machines work better, they are every day getting worse, and more unmanageable. In the language of Foster, the celebrated essayist—"The nature of man still 'casts ominous conjecture on the whole success.' While *that* is corrupt, it will pervert even the very schemes and operations by which the world should be improved, though their first principles were pure as heaven; and revolutions, great discoveries, augmented sci-

ence, and new forms of polity, will become in *effect the sublime mechanics of depravity*. Hitherto the fatal cause of all these evils, the corruption of the human heart, has sported with the weakness, or seduced the strength, of all *human* contrivances to subdue them. Nor do I perceive any signs as yet that we are commencing a better era, in which the means that have failed before, or the expedients of a new and more fortunate invention shall become irresistible, like the sword of Michael, in our hands. All the speculations and schemes of the sanguine projectors of all ages, have left the world still a prey to infinite legions of vices and miseries, an immortal band, which has trampled in scorn on the monuments and dust of *self-idolizing men, who dreamed, each in his day, that they were born to chase these evils out of the world.*" [We hope none of our great reformers of the *present day* will make a *personal* application of this. We presume Mr. Foster meant nothing *personal*.] "Their work is before them; the scene of moral disorder presents to them the plagues which they are to stop, the mountain which they are to remove, the torrent which they are to divert, the desert which they are to clothe in verdure and bloom. Let them make their experiment, and add each his page to the gloomy records in which *experience contemns the folly of imagination.*" Yes, we say, with Mr. Foster, "Let them try their experiments." They are in full chase, striving to catch and bring back the evils that have escaped from Pandora's box. We do not expect they will overtake them. No matter how fast



they go, nor how far, these evils, like a shadow or a beckoning ghost, will keep between them and their pursuers the same illusive distance. Just near enough to make them reach out after them, and just far enough off to be as effectually beyond their grasp, as if oceans rolled between. Thus will they run over hills and dales, and over states and continents, deaf to the voice of Calvary, calling them back to their abandoned, yet plighted, service. Thus will they run, ever grasping at the receding object, till, at last, they sink in the ocean of squandered existence, to be utterly forgotten, or, remembered only as the victims of a delusion. But, thank Heaven, though we expect these evils will ever elude the grasp of self-sent mortals, one resource yet remains. Hope is still in the box. Our hope is in God, and in God's plan. Turning from these schemes of men, we will put our trust in the omnipotence of God, exerted through the church, the instrumentality He has instituted for working out the moral renovation of earth. Across the river which separates our race from the land of the Millennium, God has erected a bridge sufficiently ample in its structure and dimensions for all to pass over. We do not deem it best to build any others by the side of it ; especially if they are to be supported by a single "idea," and covered with planks of paper pledges, as is the case with the Temperance and Anti-Slavery bridges. In other words, the Christian religion, brought to bear on mankind through the church, is the great instrumentality designed by Christ for reforming the world ; and, if its professors

confine themselves to the great work of spreading the Gospel, they will be more in their appropriate sphere than by turning aside, *unbidden*, by Him to Whom they have sworn allegiance, and bending their energies to the advancement of a "single idea." Here, allow us to remark, that, at this sentiment, we expect "Scrutator," and his allies, will shudder with instinctive horror. Because we have had the boldness to think the *great bridge* is sufficient, we expect these logical antagonists will put out another publication, to prove that we are at heart opposed to having *any bridge at all*. Connected with this, will be a long dissertation to show the *importance* of bridges—the dangers to which people will be exposed, in attempting to cross rivers without them; and, *then*, will come the legitimate inference; what a wretch must he be, who will stand up in the 19th century, directly facing the "march of mind," and have the hardihood to oppose these benevolent conveniences? In vain will we reply, that we utter this sentiment, not because we are ambitious to brave the "march of mind," and fall a martyr in opposition to its progress; but, because we wish to give it a proper direction; because we wish it to pass over to the land of the Millennium on the great thorough-fare Christ has provided, without turning aside to erect others near it, from the slender materials of its own invention. Very well, Gentlemen, peddle out your declamation as long as you choose. You will have the unanimous applause of the stockholders and directors in these new concerns. But, as for us, while it is our

province to direct travellers the *safest* way to cross the stream, we shall point them to the old and well-tried bridge ; and, should it be our lot, in after life, to be stationed on any of the distant by-ways that lead to this bridge, whenever interrogated by anxious passengers, we shall say, in the language of Inspiration, “ See and ask for the *old* paths, where is the *good way*, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” No, it will not do. Christians may better employ themselves than by abandoning their covenant connexion, and enlisting in this religious romance. Between Himself and all the members of his church, Jesus Christ has solemnized a marriage tie ; and, when they so far forget their vows and their duties, as to seize a subordinate idea, and make it *paramount* to the advancement of *His* kingdom, they wantonly sever a connexion, and divorce principles which He designed should be eternal ; and that, too, while the voice of Inspiration, with all its mighty sanctions, is sounding in their ears, “ What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.”

3d. These extraneous associations cannot reach the *cause* of all these evils. In morals and religion, as well as mechanics, it is an invariable rule, that the *same* causes, “ *cæteris paribus*,” produce the same *effects*. No schemes, therefore, that are, in their own nature, unadapted to remove the cause of any given effects, can possibly succeed in removing those effects. All the evils which afflict mankind are the effects of one great cause ; that is, as Foster says,

“ the *depravity* of the human heart.” Take the Temperance organization, as an illustration. Where, in that, are to be found those elements of power adapted to reach this mighty cause? In vain you search for them. Through this institution you aim only at *externals*. You strive to destroy *only* exterior acts! Where do you attempt to reach the heart—the fountain of all these evils? You are attempting to dry up the Mississippi by dipping out its waters with buckets, while you leave its fountains untouched; and even your buckets are bottomless. When will the stream be dry? Not so long as the fountain continues to pour forth its accustomed supply. And this will *never* cease, till the Omnipotence of God reaches it *through* the church and *by* the Gospel. What little success you have had, has been, in many instances, virtually the success of defeat. You have reformed men from the cup, but thousands have betaken themselves to opium, or to gluttony, or some other species of intemperance. They only change their *mode* of being intemperate. Still the question returns, Why do you not reach the *cause* of these evils? For the reason, that your institution is not adapted to the object. Your best resource is moral suasion. But this is inadequate. It is notorious that it often fails when connected with the high sanctions of religion, to effect much. How much more will it prove unavailable, when dissevered from all these tremendous sanctions, as is the case with all secular reforms? Besides, you, who are so fond of statistics, tell us *how much* you owe to the Gospel for

what little success you have? Deduct from it that portion for which you are indebted to the direct and incidental influences of the Gospel, and how much, that is of any worth, will remain? Your remaining specimens will be like the skeletons "of dry bones" seen by the prophet—withered, dried, and dead. Do your best, you cannot string them with nerves, and muscles, and clothe them with flesh—much less, put within them the breath of life. You may stand and plead and argue before them till doom's day, yet you will effect nothing. Your declamation, like the incantations of an eastern conjurer, over the dried and antiquated body of a mummy, will never bring them to life; and, like the conjurer with his incantations, you are wasting time and energies for nought, that might be better employed. But you will say, "Is it not notorious, that, while we were declaiming, thousands *have been* clothed with the habiliments of flesh, and walked forth as living evidences of our power?" So, too, while you were declaiming, rain fell and vegetation grew, but that does not prove there was any necessary connexion between your declamation and the falling of the rain, or the growth of vegetation. That *you* should not discern the difference, or that you should claim all the credit for yourselves, is not to be wondered at. God still carries on His grand purposes *through* the church and *by* the Gospel, *whatever you* may do; nor will He cease "breathing life," into these skeletons, because ignorant mortals may think it is the effect of their *own* power, and claim the glory for themselves. If, then, the Gospel imparts to your

boasted success all its *real virtue*, why not act the part of wisdom and adhere to *that* organization, with which God has deposited the Gospel, and through whose institutions He works for the “pulling down of strong holds?”

But this is not all. You have in this extraneous organization, no elements of *stability* and *permanency*. Look at the history of this movement. Nothing but one continued succession of *advances* and *relapses*. Society, wielded by it, swings to and fro, like the tide. When at the close of some powerful appeals from your declaimers, the tide has receded, your custom has been to shout “victory,” and run down on the shore to the water’s edge, and there, with great parade, erect your embankments of paper pledges to prevent its return. But it has as invariably returned as it has gone out, and sometimes, as if to show its contempt for these paper embankments, it has not only swept them away, but has overflowed the surrounding country with tenfold more destruction than before. Look at your experiments with your license laws, for an example. So will it ever be. We have an ample store of facts in our possession to verify this. View this matter, then, in any aspect you choose, and you will find that experience does, indeed, “cast ominous conjecture on the whole success.” If you aim only at *partial* success, your reward is infinitely disproportionate to your labor. If, with the experience you have already had, you expect *complete* success—if you expect to make eight hundred millions of human beings sign the pledge of

total abstinence and keep it, Mr. Barnes need not say of you, that you are "fools of necessity," but of choice. No, your scheme is utterly impracticable. You cannot permanently advance your "one idea," so long as it is weighed down with so many unwieldy incumbrances. It is too much like an ant, tugging the livelong day at a burthen it cannot lift; or, if by extraordinary assiduity, it gets the burthen a little farther up, it is only rewarded for its folly by tumbling down again, burthen and all, to the bottom of its artificial hill. But as the ant, untaught by experience, renews the enterprise with like success, so will you.

4th. These associations foster a spirit of exclusive benevolence; if, indeed, that can be *benevolence* which is *exclusive*. Their adherents freely parade their donations to advance their hobby, but have little or nothing for the spread of the Gospel. Practically their motto is, millions for our favorite idea, but not a cent to spread the Gospel.

5th. If these men will devote the same zeal, and time, and energies, and money, to the direct furtherance of the Gospel, they would do really more towards their professed object than they do *now*. You can never push a single, isolated "idea" ahead of the Gospel, and *keep it* there. All true reform is symmetrical. God's way of reforming the world is not to carry one thing forward at a time, and then return and take another. His mode is not to make the world temperance men first, and then come back,

and go to work to make them Sabbath-keepers ; and then, when that is done, return again, and take hold of something else. His plan is to take *all along* together. This is the only *safe* way. Mere abstinence from alcohol, while men indulge in a thousand other things just as bad, is but little moral advantage to the world, and is a small reward for the labor and expense bestowed in bringing it about. If salvation from mere temporal misery is your object, then bend your efforts to the furtherance of the Gospel, and that, in its benign workings, will save mankind from a *greater* amount of even temporal misery—for it will reform multitudes not only from their cups but from all other vices. Then, it has the infinite advantage over your scheme, of making its saving virtue felt beyond the grave. Aim, therefore, to make men Christians, and you will gain, not only your favorite object, but every thing else that is worth gaining.

6th. Men who become warmly enlisted in these enterprizes, are prone to substitute their good works, in these respects, for their duties to the church. Becoming absorbed in a single thing, leads them to neglect those private and public ordinances, designed for their individual sanctification. They have no time or heart except for the *one thing*. In this they do a twofold injury: an injury to themselves—an injury to religion. An injury to themselves, because they are neglecting their own dearest interests. An injury to religion, because they withhold from the church those services which she has a right, from their covenant vows, to expect.



7th. These associations, by confining the mind to a single "idea," make their members self-righteous, uncharitable and dictatorial. Do you hesitate to favor this or that move in the Temperance Reform? You are a drunkard—not only "a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber and a friend of publicans and sinners," but worse. You are behind the age. You oppose every good reform. Do you hesitate to fall in with a new phase of the Abolition movement? You are a "manstealer." So with respect to other movements of a similar character. Call to mind the dictatorial tone and manner of the reformed drunkards. With what impudent, not to say impious dogmatism, did they attempt to mark out a course for the clergy? He who had the presumption to question their right to dictate, or to refuse them his pulpit, must at once be assailed with a virulence as malicious as it was unrelenting. Yet they were thrust forward and encouraged in this bitter proscription, by whom? by your *respectable* and *church-going* reformers. What cared they for the sacredness of their religion or of the pulpit? All must be degraded to suit this grand stride in the "march of mind." Instead of attending, as they ought, to their religious duties, these newly tamed lions must be led about, to roar and rage, in the proportion of twice against the ministry to once against "King Alcohol." Whenever a blasphemous wretch took it into his head to get out of the ditch, wash, put on a clean shirt and dub himself a Reformed Drunkard, the minister of God must be thrust aside and his pulpit given up,

that this new proselyte may detail a minute account of his revellings and debaucheries, and “glory in his shame,” before whom? Before the chaste wives and daughters of these very men—men whose religious sensibilities are so exceedingly nice and refined, that they would not, for the world, allow their daughter to read a novel. Would that this were all. They likewise assume to dictate to the church, what she shall believe and what she shall do. Not satisfied to lay hold of the ark of God as it is in the highway, they follow it to the tabernacle; rend aside the curtains with their uncircumcised hands, and press their heaven daring intrusion even to the most holy place. They attempt to introduce syrup as a substitute for wine, as an emblem of the Saviour’s blood; and if the appointed officers of God’s house, do not see fit to connive at the sacrilege, they, too, must be persecuted and hunted down by the same fell spirit of profanation. This is no fancy sketch. It is a picture of *facts*. To their shame be it spoken, many of the churches have yielded, and become subservient. When the Synod of Albany, during a regular meeting, as is the custom, threw itself on the hospitality of one of its churches, though its pastor, if not its session, could not but have known, that such a step would be offensive to many, this session were allowed, without the least intimation of what was to be done, to offer this syrup at the communion service, to the Synod, as an emblem of their Redeemer’s blood. [“Scrutator,” do you know any thing of this?] This same session have taken it upon

them to rebuke, in their official capacity, the General Assembly for their action on Slavery, and to publish that rebuke to the world. In the same spirit, it is said, that the pastor and the session have taken incipient measures for dissolving their connexion with the Presbyterian church, because, forsooth, the General Assembly will not consent to the idea that the opinions of said pastor and session are infallible on the subject of Slavery. Happily, however, if rumor be true, this pastor and session have been overruled by a vote, for their honor be it spoken, of the congregation. Before us lies the printed form of an invitation to communion, adopted by another church, in an adjoining county. We will give it to the reader.

*Form of Invitation to the Communion.*—All persons present, members of Evangelical churches in *good* and *regular* standing, *except* such as use, manufacture or traffic in intoxicating liquors as a *beverage*, and also such as hold their fellow-men in slavery, or justify slavery or advocate its continued existence, are cordially invited to sit down with us at the table of our *common* Lord and Redeemer.

This very church, with the spirit of the true “Progressive Democracy in religion,” have also taken the ground, that it is unlawful for its members to *keep a secret*, and will neither commune with nor tolerate a fellow-christian, who is an Odd Fellow. However, we do not know that they are very blameworthy, when learned Synods and Presbyteries are so ready to adopt a mode of legislation, which, either explicitly, or *in effect*, makes dancing, and various other

things of a similar nature, terms of church membership. So long as this is the case, we have little hope that the spirit of dictation on the part of these extraneous organizations, and the consequent troubles they are, in this way, causing throughout the land, will come to an end.

8th. These associations, by these proceedings, produce a most unhappy impression on the irreligious. Nothing brings religion into disrepute so much as the *false* issues these associations are constantly raising. When a single question of this kind is made the all-in-all of religion, men lose their respect for its professors, and, by consequence, for the thing itself. Many become infidels.

9th. They impose on the public by fallacious statistics, and build on these statistics an equally fallacious philosophy. When jail and prison statistics were first gathered on the subject of Temperance, they fell on the world like the "Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk." Men were astounded. Much of this statistical information was well calculated to deceive. When an ardent lecturer, who was eager to magnify his single "idea" as much as possible, visited a jail or prison, he was ready to put down every culprit, who, in the course of his life, had drunk a glass of liquor, as having been brought there by intemperance. All the crime, and evil, and misery, according to these estimates, were the *result* of intemperance.

Finally, they are diverting the mind of Christians from their great and appropriate business

ness—the spread of the Gospel. Not only is this the effect of associations already formed, as we think we have sufficiently shown, but there has arisen a sort of mania for society making. When it will exhaust itself, and the religious public will come to their senses on this subject, we cannot tell. One thing we know, these things are exceedingly injurious to religion.\* Entertaining these views of the

\* We cut an article from the Presbyterian, taken originally from the Boston Recorder, which humorously exposes the false philosophy of the age, built on these false statistics; and, also, the mania for society making. As it will, doubtless, be a treat to the reader, we transcribe it entire—title and all:—

UNGUINIANISM.—Is it not astonishing, that in this age of reformation, the Christian world has continued to sleep over this important subject—the excessive paring of nails? Once a week is certainly sufficient, for all reasonable purposes. Why, then, should we suffer that immense waste of time and talent, caused by doing it twice a week? Suppose that the operation is performed in one minute—which is certainly a moderate estimate. The world is supposed to contain 800,000,000 inhabitants. By paring nails twice a week, therefore, instead of once, 800,000,000 minutes are lost to the human race every week. The minutes are equal to 13,333,333 hours, or 555,555 days, or 1520 years, every week, or 79,040 years of human life annually. Or rather, allowing men to labour only twelve hours a day instead of twenty-four, it is equal to the entire labour of 158,080 men. Allowing their time to be worth \$100 a year each, the annual pecuniary loss amounts to \$15,808,000. This sum would endow 105 colleges annually, with funds of \$150,000 each. It would give a salary of \$500 each to 31,616 ministers. It would build 5,269 meeting houses annually, at \$3,000 each.

But the pecuniary loss is not the most affecting consideration. Only think of the entire working hours of 150,080 men, squandered in the unnecessary paring of finger nails! So much useful human activity blotted from existence! So much opportunity for mental and moral improvement, annihilated! So many human beings, so far as useful existence is concerned, murdered in every generation! Or, rather, every individual of the human race, robbed of his share of 158,080 years of life! O! the apathy of mankind, in view of this universal murder! And we have all, by our silent acquiescence, if in no other way, consented to it, and thus made ourselves partakers of the guilt. What meetings have we held—

whole policy of extraneous organizations, we think we shall err on the *safe* side, by steadily adhering to God's plan of reforming the world. We are not captious. We speak forth the words of "truth and soberness." Here we close our plea for the *Church*, as the *great instrument* of reform; and will only add, "may our right hand forget its cunning, and our tongue cleave to the roof of our mouth, if," in this respect, "we prefer not Jerusalem above our chief joy."

Akin to these extraneous associations, and as a part of the same policy, are the special enactments of ecclesiastical bodies against special evils. This is no more the Gospel policy—or the policy instituted by Christ and the Apostles, than the former. What do these men mean by such legislation? Do they intend thereby to *supply* the deficiencies of the word of God? Or, if, as they tell us, and as the New School Assembly have told the world on the subject of dancing, the Bible is *plain* and *explicit* on these points,

what agents have we sent forth—what presses have we established—what notes of remonstrance have we in any way sent forth, against this devourer of human life? The pulpit is dumb, the press is muzzled, and universal silence proclaims our condemnation, as a pro-too-much-nail-cutting people. Where, O where is the Luther, whose iron trumpet-note shall break this sleep of ages?—Where is the Howard, whose "circumnavigation of charity"—and so on, as long as you please.

If any one questions the fact, that men pare their nails twice a week, instead of once, as they ought, he may be put down by the following plain answers. 1. It is notorious that they do. 2. He who denies it is wholly uninformed on this subject. 3. He is altogether behind the spirit of the age. 4. He is an enemy to the unguinian reformation. 5. He pares his own nails too much. 6. All the other arguments which are fashionable on such occasions.

do they intend to confer on that Word, by their ecclesiastical enactments, additional sanctity? Do they impart to it additional unction? If it be so, why not have the next General Assembly (shall it be after a season of special prayer?) solemnly add their collective sanction to the Ten Commandments, or the Sermon on the Mount, or Paul's Epistle to the Romans? Would not the Decalogue, ever after, assail the conscience with a mightier energy?— Would not the Beatitudes acquire additional virtue? Would not Paul's exposition of the doctrine of Justification, be like the bursting out of the full orb'd sun at midnight? Were he to rise to life again, just after such an enactment had passed the Assembly, would not his ardent soul swell with gratitude for this timely aid? And Moses, too, were he to stand by the side of the Apostle, on the occasion, would he not receive the Decalogue on account of this additional sanctity, thus conferred upon it, with a profounder awe, than he did amid the smoke, and flames, and thunderings of Sinai? But they intend to drive these evils out of the world by their ecclesiastical "resolves." Foolish Apostles! How were you deluded in supposing this wicked world was to be subjugated to our Lord and His Christ, by that "Word" which you called "mighty through God to the pulling down of the strong holds?" What treasures of time and labor have you squandered through this vain delusion! Had you only been favored with a discovery of the improvement of modern times, and devoted yourselves to the *all-efficient* method of assem-

bling in your ecclesiastical capacity, and passing "resolves" against this and that evil, we, of the present day, would have been basking amid the full blaze of the Millenium. Happily, however, our modern Presbyteries and Synods will soon recover what you have lost. They will now go to work with an unconquerable determination to kill Intemperance, Slavery, Dancing, Worldliness, and other evils, by their all-potent "resolves." Glorious era! Another grand stride in the "march of mind!" By all means, let these learned Synods be immediately convened, that they may make up a few hundred bundles of these "resolves," to send to the heathen. Only arm the missionary with a few of them, and he will have no more use for that paltry Bible, on which heretofore he has so much relied.

Some fourteen years ago, Sir, your Synod passed resolutions encouraging the formation of Seventh Commandment Societies, and expressly recommended McDowell and his Journal to the confidence of the Christian public. What did you? You threw a ball of yarn against a mountain of granite. And you might have continued to throw till doom's day, yet you never would have made an impression. But what is the criterion by which you determine the necessity of such legislation? By the magnitude of the evils contemplated? Then instead of encouraging Seventh Commandment Societies simply, why did you not begin at the beginning? Why did you not pass an enactment favoring the formation of a First Commandment Society? Then a Second, then



a Third, and so on, till you had gone through the Decalogue? till you had stirred up the churches to form *ten* distinct societies, corresponding to the Ten Commandments? More still. On the same principle why did you not favor further organizations against the "*Species*," as well as the "*Genus*?" Had you taken the Shorter Catechism, and singled out the *particular* vices mentioned in the various answers given to the question, What does this or that commandment teach? had you selected these vices as fit objects for special organizations, you would have made a far more logical use of these questions and answers, than you did in your miserable replication to our arguments. Yes, carry out the principle. Keep on till you get up as many organizations as there are evils in the world. Then, where are you? Just where the church was at the *outset*. *That* was organized against *all* these vices, and *this* is what you have done, with one *important* difference; the church possesses within herself the elements of power *amply* adequate to the accomplishment of the object. But these elements do not belong to *either one* of your particular organizations nor to *all combined*. Were we to adopt the principle, the Synod thus sanctioned by its legislation, we would immediately set about the project of dividing up the church into sub-committees, each having for its object the extermination of some particular evil. [Here, by the by, is another difficulty connected with special organizations; that the principle, *carried out*, leads to a manifest absurdity.] With our present views, however, instead of

forming these sub-committees, we prefer remaining in "committee of the whole;" and also prefer that learned ecclesiastics devote the time, spent in putting forth these special enactments, to the better employment of preaching the Gospel. Still, if they think they can break and scatter the rock to fragments by hurling at it their balls of yarn, we repeat, "Let them try their experiments." One would suppose a little reflection would teach them the folly of such measures. At all events, that they would learn this from *history*, if not from reflection. The entire experience of the Church, through all ages, demonstrates the utter inutility of all such special enactments.

Take the matter of Dancing, for an example. The kirks of Scotland have repeatedly attempted to suppress it. But all to no effect. It is notorious that the Scotch have kept up the custom of dancing from time immemorial, and the more the kirks legislate the less they accomplish. Human nature will not bear it. Here, by the by, is a *fact* that does not fall in with the theory of "Scrutator," and his allies, on this subject. Dancing has not had so demoralizing an effect on the Scotch as they argue it must have. Where is there a church on earth more celebrated for its adherence to the doctrines of the Gospel than the Scotch church? Where is there a people that have deteriorated less than they in point of morals? However, we refer to this fact not to justify dancing by American Christians. We still think, that, *in existing circumstances*, it is better for all Christians to abstain. But *it is* an evidence that no ecclesiastical

legislation can reach the evil. We might compile volumes of historical examples to the same point. Whenever the Church has tried this kind of legislation, she has either barely failed, or else increased the evil. It never does any good. One enactment against Dancing, enforced through the Sessions, by way of discipline, will cause ten dancing parties, where there was one before. You can only suppress the evil by elevating the tone of piety *through* the Gospel. Do this, and you will have nothing to fear. What we wish you to understand is, that, even if these evils are as bad as you say, yet, you are not taking *the* method to get rid of them. You have taken hold of the *wrong end* of the lever. Now, if you will just cease this waste of energies—if you will just step over to the other side of the fulcrum, and take hold of the long end of the lever, you will lift these obstacles out of the way with far greater ease. Do this, and you will not run the hazard of breaking your backs, by an excessive strain, without accomplishing your object.

In saying what we have, our sole object has been to follow out the maxim of the Rev. Albert Barnes, quoted on our title page, i. e. “to convince the world,” as far as in us lies, “that christians are not of necessity *fools*.” Our position in regard to the, so called, reforms of the day, will, of course, be misrepresented. “Fools” will stigmatize us as the advocate of Dancing, of drunkenness, and the opponent of every good reform. But we know perfectly with whom we have to deal, and have counted the *cost* of

the undertaking. We think we shall be able to meet every item of the expense, and honor every draft, though it be payable *at sight*. On the score of personal piety, we concede the palm to "Scrutator"—"et id omne genus." For we frankly confess we have no religion to *boast* of. To the public we say, we love every *good* reform, but from our very soul we *abominate* fanaticism. If we *must* choose we prefer that our house may rot down by gradual decay, than to have it torn up and scattered over the fields by a whirlwind. For the present, we shall remain in a state of "masterly inactivity," and see what we shall see;—simply commending, in conclusion, to "Scrutator" and his allies, the following from the pen of the great and good Pascal; one, of whom the world are constrained to say—"Few men have ever dwelt on this ideal of moral perfection [i. e. Christ] or sought to realize its image in themselves, with more ardor than he." He says :

"You go so far as to say, 'that I have turned *sa-  
 "ered things into ridicule.*' What! are the fancies of  
 "your *authors* to pass for articles of faith? And may  
 "not the fantastic and unchristian decisions of some  
 "of *your writers*, be laughed at, without incurring the  
 "charge of making a *jest* of religion? Are you not  
 "seriously apprehensive, that, while censuring me  
 "for ridiculing your extravagancies, you will furnish  
 "me with a new subject of mockery, namely, *that*  
 "*very censure itself?* that I shall retort it upon your-  
 "selves, by showing that I have ridiculed nothing  
 "in your writings but what was *really ridiculous?*—

“ *There is a wonderful difference between laughing at reli-*  
 “ *gion, and laughing at those who profane it by their ex-*  
 “ *travagant opinions.* There are two things sufficiently  
 “ obvious in the truths of religion, a divine beauty  
 “ which renders them lovely, and a holy majesty,  
 “ which makes them venerable ; and there are two  
 “ observable peculiarities in errors—*an impiety, which*  
 “ *renders them horrible, and an impertinence which makes*  
 “ *them ridiculous.* Having sufficiently explained this  
 “ point, I shall do no more than quote the admirable  
 “ language of Tertullian, which justifies my whole  
 “ procedure. ‘There are many things which deserve  
 “ to be derided and jeered in this manner, lest they  
 “ should acquire any kind of importance by a serious  
 “ attack. Nothing is more worthy of laughter than  
 “ vanity, and it belongs to truth to laugh, because  
 “ she is gay, and to sport with her enemies, because  
 “ she is *certain of victory.*’ Charity sometimes obliges  
 “ us to ridicule the errors of men, that they may be  
 “ induced to laugh at them themselves.”

Thus endeth the second lesson from

CLERICUS.

## APPENDIX.

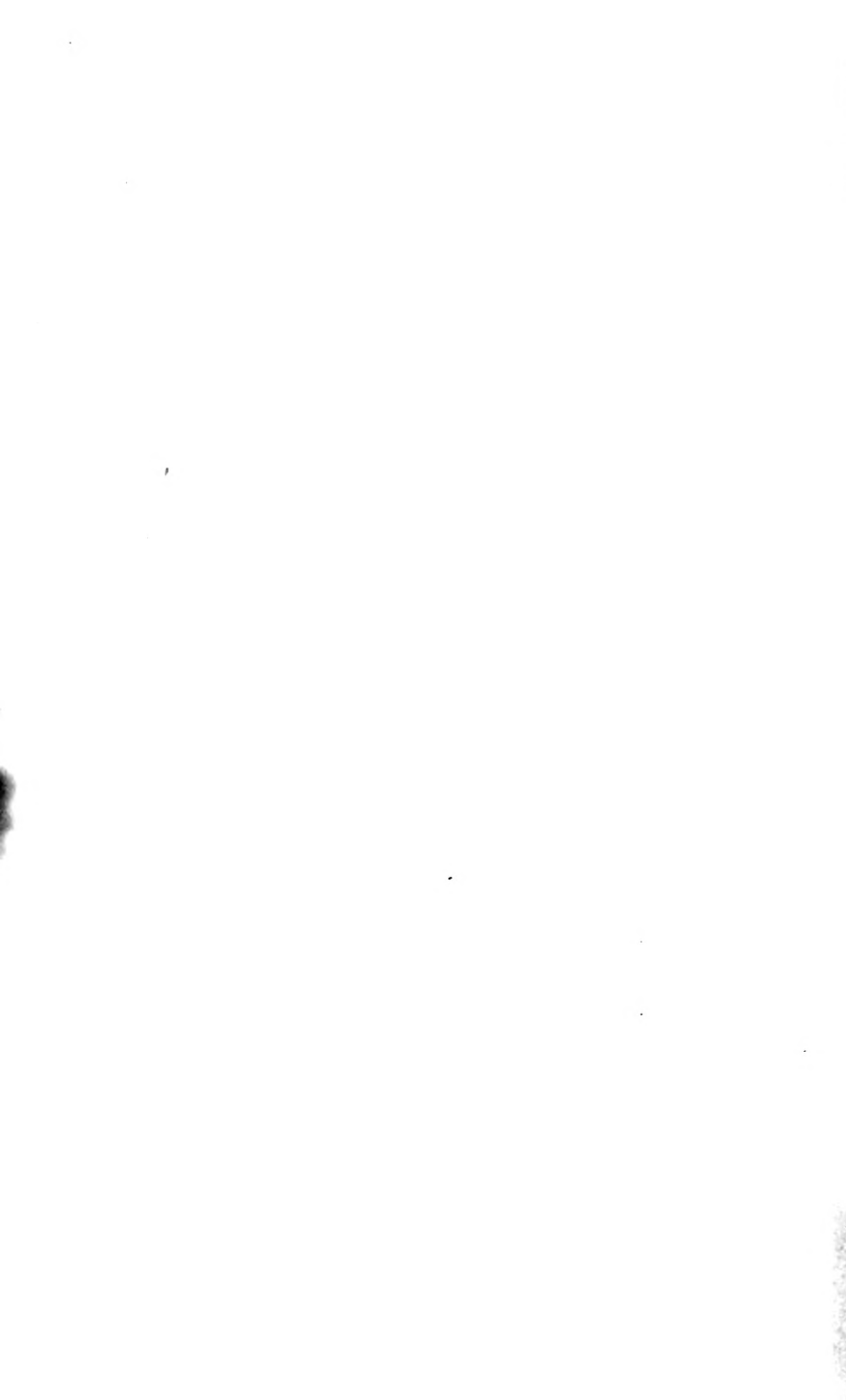
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Another of the "ten cases," (including that of the "Old Lady") to which the author of the Tract on the Evils of Intemperance referred, and the truthfulness of which is vouched for by the American Tract Society, has just come to our knowledge. It is the case of a young man, twenty-five years of age, and is related as follows: "He was found in a blacksmith's shop, just across the way from where he had been. The owner, all of a sudden, discovered an extensive light in his shop, as though the *whole building was in a flame*. He ran with the greatest precipitancy, and, on flinging open the door, discovered a man standing erect in the midst of a widely extended silver coloured blaze, bearing, as he described it, exactly the appearance of the wick of a burning candle, in the midst of its own flame. He seized him by the shoulder and jerked him to the door; upon which the flame was instantly extinguished," &c.—with the *usual* disastrous termination. This case, it appears, was a *little* different from that of the "Old Lady." Water, poured on in "abundance" had *no effect* in her case, except to *make the fire "more violent,"* but the "young man" was instantly "*jerked out of the flame*" by the strong arm of the blacksmith.—There are other *internal* evidences of the *truthfulness* of this story, equally as conclusive as those in the story of the "Aged Pastor," or of that relating to the "Old Lady." We serve up this story simply as another "Dumpling of Comfort" for "Scrutator." He will doubtless relish this even more than he did the one furnished him by the "Aged Pastor," for this is yet *hot*—the blacksmith has just "*jerked it out of the flame.*" Down with it, "Scrutator;" but beware of "*spontaneous combustion.*" "Oh! Sir, we would be sorry" to have you burn up "*for your own sake.*"









DATE DUJ

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